

## What Are ACT's College Readiness Benchmarks?

ACT's College Readiness Benchmarks are the minimum ACT test scores required for students to have a high probability of success in credit-bearing college courses—English Composition, social sciences courses, College Algebra, or Biology. In addition to the Benchmarks for the ACT<sup>®</sup> test, there are corresponding EXPLORE<sup>®</sup> and PLAN<sup>®</sup> Benchmarks for use by students who take these programs in the eighth and tenth grades, respectively, to gauge their progress in becoming ready for college. And for students taking COMPASS<sup>®</sup>, a computer-adaptive course placement assessment used by colleges, we have identified the College Readiness Benchmarks on the COMPASS scale corresponding to success in credit-bearing community college courses.

**ACT's College Readiness Benchmarks**

College Course or Course Area	Test	EXPLORE Score	PLAN Score	ACT Score	COMPASS Score*
English Composition	English	13	15	18	77
Social Sciences	Reading	15	17	21	88
College Algebra	Mathematics	17	19	22	52
Biology	Science	20	21	24	n/a

\* The COMPASS English Benchmark refers to the COMPASS Writing Skills Test. The COMPASS Mathematics Benchmark refers to the COMPASS Algebra Test. COMPASS does not contain a science test.

### Why these courses?

English Composition, College Algebra, and Biology are the first credit-bearing courses most commonly taken by first-year college students. Course placement data also show that reading achievement is most closely aligned with success in credit-bearing social sciences courses in college.

### What do we mean by “a high probability of success”?

Students who meet a Benchmark on the ACT or COMPASS have approximately a 50 percent chance of earning a B or better and approximately a 75 percent chance of earning a C or better in the corresponding college course or courses. Students who meet a Benchmark on EXPLORE or PLAN are likely to have approximately this same chance of earning such a grade in the corresponding college course(s) by the time they graduate high school.